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THE EMIRS AND THE SPREAD OF WESTERN EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1910-1946

BY PETER KAZENGA TIBENDERANA*

That northern Nigeria¹ lags far behind southern Nigeria in Western educational development today is a truism which requires no qualification. The seeds of this educational imbalance were sown during the colonial period. The emirs who, up to the establishment of the Northern Regional House of Assembly in 1947, were the vanguard of the northern political leadership, have been largely blamed for contributing to the educational backwardness of northern Nigeria by their deeds and omissions.

It has been asserted, for example, that the absence of any deep commitment on the part of the emirs ensured that the limits of educational growth established by the level of government investment were never challenged.² We have been made to understand also that they rarely pressed the British administration to build more schools.³ Indeed, it has been alleged that throughout British rule in northern Nigeria (1900-60) no emir ever asked the British administration for more money for the development of education in his emirate.⁴ It has also been suggested that the emirs did not encourage the development of Western education out of fear that a new educated class outside the *malam* class would challenge their political and religious authority.⁵ Again it has been suggested that the majority of the emirs, district and village heads refused to send their most 'promising' sons to school and that the ones they allowed to attend were so low on the family scale that they had little chance of ever holding a hereditary position in local government, thus prejudicing the value of Western education.⁶ Indeed Professor Heussler is of the view that had the 'British approach been merely deferential, a type

* The idea of writing this article occurred to me after a discussion I had with Mr A. H. M. Kirk-Greene of St Antony's College, Oxford. I wish to express my thanks to him for his stimulating questions, without which it might never have been written.

¹ Northern Nigeria as used in this article is a political term rather than a geographical one. It refers to the former Protectorate of Northern Nigeria which came into existence on 1 January 1900. This territory was amalgamated with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and Lagos Colony on 1 January 1914 to form the present Federal Republic of Nigeria. After the amalgamation, the area formerly known as the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria became the northern provinces until 1945 when it became the Northern Region. From 1900 to 1967 northern Nigeria was administered as one unit. However, in 1967 the area was divided into states.

² J. H. Hubbard, 'Education under colonial rule: A history of Katsina College, 1921-42' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1973), 192.

³ See *ibid.* and J. S. Coleman (ed.), *Educational and Political Development* (Princeton, 1968), 138-9.

⁴ A. Ozigi and L. Ocho, *Education in Northern Nigeria* (London, 1981), 41.

⁵ *Ibid.* 40-1.

⁶ R. W. Hull, 'The development of administration in Katsina Emirate, Northern Nigeria, 1887-1944' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1968), 351-3; D. R. Boyan, 'Educational Policy Formulation in the North of Nigeria, 1900-1969' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1979), 110-122, 177; and R. Heussler, *The British in Northern Nigeria* (London, 1968), 189.

of rule that was literally indirect' there would have been little or no progress in the realm of education or in any other field for that matter in northern Nigeria.⁷ The implication of this statement is that the emirs were not capable of initiating any developing scheme because of their dogged conservatism. It has been argued that they could see no necessity for Western education which 'to the old ways of life was not only unnecessary, but in their view dangerous'.⁸ This, according to some authorities, was due to the fact that Muslim society in northern Nigeria was very conservative, unlike Muslim societies in countries such as Egypt, Syria and Turkey which at the time of the introduction of Western education in northern Nigeria (1910) 'were grappling with the problem of synthesizing traditional Islam with modernist development'.⁹

Moreover it has been suggested that the emirs and their Muslim subjects were unwilling to send their children to native administration schools out of fear that they would be vulnerable to conversion to Christianity, the religion of British officials, and that the emirs' intolerance of Christianity was largely responsible for the restriction of mission education by the British administration.¹⁰ We have also been told that each emir was the *defensor fidei* in his emirate and that 'as such he could not willingly welcome the missionaries and by so doing sponsor Christian proselytization unless he could plead a force majeure'.¹¹ This infers that they were under a religious obligation not to tolerate mission education, which they knew to be a vehicle for Christian proselytization in their emirates.

These criticisms are spurious and overlook the chief factors which were largely responsible for the tardy progress of Western education in northern Nigeria during 1910–46. They are based on a misconception of the machinery of British administration in northern Nigeria during the period. The purpose of this article is to assess the role which the emirs played in the development of Western education in their emirates up to 1946 and to determine why their efforts achieved very little success. The article does not address itself to the whole question of Western educational development in northern Nigeria which is dealt with in another study.¹²

During the period covered by this article the British claimed to be ruling northern Nigeria in accordance with the principles of indirect rule as expounded¹³ by Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard, the first High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1900–6), and C. L. Temple, the first Resident of Bauchi province, who later became the Lieutenant-Governor of northern Nigeria (1914–17). It is generally assumed that under the system of indirect rule not only were the powers which the

⁷ Heussler, *British*, 189.

⁸ D. H. Williams, *A Short Survey of Education in Northern Nigeria* (Kaduna, 1959), 7.

⁹ G. O. Gbadamosi, 'The establishment of Western education among Muslims in Nigeria', *J. Hist. Soc. Nigeria*, IV, i (1967), 102.

¹⁰ C. N. Ubah, 'Problems of Christian missionaries in the Muslim emirates of Nigeria, 1900–1928', *J. Afr. Studies*, III, iii (1976), 362–5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 352.

¹² See P. K. Tibenderana, *The Development of Western Education in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, 1907–1960* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, in preparation).

¹³ See F. D. Lugard, *Political Memoranda 1913–1918* (London, 1919), 296–318; and C. L. Temple, *Native Races and their Rulers* (Cape Town, 1918), 29–79.

emirs exercised before the inception of British rule preserved but also increased. Put in another way, the British ruled northern Nigeria together with the emirs and through indigenous institutions.¹⁴ The impression given by such a statement is that the emirs remained the indisputable rulers of their respective emirates despite the establishment of British rule. This impression is largely responsible for the misrepresentation of their role in the development of Western education. For it is assumed that since they remained the *de facto* rulers of their respective emirates, they ought to have used their authority over their British partners to bring about accelerated educational development if they had been ardent supporters of Western education.

But recent studies¹⁵ on British administration in northern Nigeria have shown that it was not a diarchy ruled jointly by the emirs and the British. It was a British colonial territory ruled and governed by the British alone. The emirs were British assistants and not rulers—if by a ruler we mean one who exercises supreme or sovereign authority. Indeed, under the terms of their letters of appointment emirs were stripped of sovereign authority. They were required to obey all the orders of the Governor; failure to comply would lose them their posts.¹⁶ For instance, they were warned that they had no power to appoint their officials except with the consent of the Governor and that in judicial matters and ‘in all other matters in the Government of the land, it is your duty to follow the orders of the Resident . . .’ They could also neither raise taxes, except those sanctioned by the British administration, nor spend native administration revenue, without the sanction of the Governor.¹⁷

The power to spend native administration revenue was invested in the Resident, who alone was charged with the responsibility of preparing the budgets of the native administrations within his province.¹⁸ But in undertaking this responsibility the Residents were punctiliously teleguided from the Lieutenant-Governor’s office in Kaduna.¹⁹ For example, in 1917 the

¹⁴ See C. L. Temple, *Native*, 29–79; and F. D. Lugard, *Political*, 296–318.

¹⁵ See I. F. Nicolson, *The Administration of Nigeria 1900–1960* (Oxford, 1969); and R. Heussler, *British*.

¹⁶ Among the emirs who suffered this fate during 1910–46 was Muhammad Tambari, the Sultan of Sokoto (1924–31). For a clearer exposition of the circumstances which led to Sultan Tambari’s deposition see P. K. Tibenderana, ‘The making and unmaking of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Tambari, 1922–1931’, *J. Hist. Soc. Nigeria*, ix, i (1977), 91–134.

¹⁷ On the emirs’ terms of appointment see F. D. Lugard, ‘Specimen translation of Sultan Attahiru’s letter of appointment’, 22 March 1903, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 77. Throughout the period covered by this article emir’s letters of appointment contained conditions of service similar to those embodied in Sultan Attahiru’s letter of appointment. See, for instance, F. D. Lugard, ‘Specimen translation of Suleiman’s letter of appointment’, 7 September 1915, Nigerian National Archives Kaduna (hereafter N.N.A.K.), Sokprof. 3/1/C.7.

¹⁸ On the powers of the Residents over the expenditure of the native administrations see F. D. Lugard to A. B. Law, Lagos, 28 February 1916, C.O. 583/46. One of Temple’s proposals, which was adopted as government policy, was that since the native administration could not exert the discretionary powers in financial matters granted to them without the consent of the Resident, the latter would be held personally responsible for the proper use of all native administration funds. The Residents usually invoked this axiom to repel emirs’ budgetary proposals if they did not favour them.

¹⁹ On the powers of the Lieutenant-Governor (Chief Commissioner) over the budgets of the native administrations see Secretary, Northern Provinces (hereafter S.N.P.), *Financial Memoranda for Guidance in Native Treasuries* (Kaduna, 1930). For instance on

Sultan of Sokoto was refused permission by the Lieutenant-Governor to spend a sum of £69 on the construction of a dormitory to accommodate pupils attending Sokoto primary school whose homes were too far away from the town and had nowhere else to live, although the project was zealously supported by E. J. Arnett, the Resident of Sokoto at the time. Arnett protested to the Lieutenant-Governor, complaining that he could not see any cogent reason why the Sultan whose native treasury had a total revenue of £40,000 in 1917, and had been contributing a sum of £8,000 annually to the War Fund, since it was instituted in 1914, could not be allowed to spend a meagre sum of £69 on a very important project. He asked, with dismay, how the emirs and chiefs could develop any sense of responsibility, or the Residents in charge of provinces feel that their opinions and recommendations had any weight whatever, if small matters such as the spending of £69 had to be left to the Governor's decision.²⁰ To this complaint H. M. Goldsmith, the Lieutenant-Governor of the northern provinces at the time, retorted that Sokoto was not an independent unit with financial autonomy but a province of Nigeria. As such, he went on, the Sultan like other emirs had to learn to develop his sense of responsibility, and it was sometimes necessary for him to subordinate his ideals of expenditure to those responsible to the Governor-General for the administration of the northern provinces—meaning himself.²¹ One is left to wonder: if the Sultan of Sokoto, a first class chief, could not expend a meagre sum of £69 of his native administration's revenue without the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, who of the other emirs could do so? It can be concluded, with much justification, that the emirs had no power over the expenditure of their native administrations.

Deprived of the power to draw up budgets, the emirs could not be expected to initiate development projects which entailed the expenditure of native administration revenue. To say the least, the role of the emirs in the expenditure of native administration revenue was that of onlookers who waited patiently to be given some assignment to carry out by their British masters.²² It is with the foregoing observations in mind that the role which they played in the spread of Western education can be adequately appraised.

Perhaps the emirs' major contribution to the spread of Western education was their early appreciation of its political and social significance, when it was first introduced in their emirates, during the second decade of this century. They did not require to be coaxed into sending their sons to native administration schools when they were established. Thanks to their *savoir faire* they realized that under a colonial situation their scions could not hope to continue to hold on to the reins of power unless they acquired the white man's education. They demonstrated this fact by sending their children, especially sons, to school solicitously. Indeed in some extreme cases emirs

p. 7 of this document Residents were required to submit all the proposals involving new items of expenditure or increased expenditure under the existing items to the Lieutenant-Governor for his consideration and approval before they were embodied in the estimates.

²⁰ E. J. Arnett to S.N.P., Sokoto, 24 February 1917, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 8/4/20/1917.

²¹ H. M. Goldsmith to E. J. Arnett, Kaduna, 9 March 1917, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 8/4/20/1917.

²² I am greatly indebted to Alhaji Haruna, the emir of Gwandu since 1954, for this assessment. Oral testimony, when interviewed by the author, Birnin Kebbi, 10 March 1972.

objected to the sons of their political rivals and opponents gaining admission to native administration schools. For example, in 1919 the Superintendent of Education in charge of Zaria province complained to the Director of Education that:

No one understands the advantages of education at the [Zaria elementary] school better than the Emir of Zaria [Aliyu] who has induced thirty-four parents and guardians to send their boys to school during the year... He wishes his own sons and protégés to have the benefits of a liberal education [but] he does not want the sons of rich traders, sons of men belonging to dynasties other than his own,²³ or sons of men whom for various reasons he does not like, to have the same attainment as the sons of his own men.²⁴

It is small wonder, then, that the majority of the emirs clamoured to have their sons and brothers admitted to native administration schools and to Kaduna College, which until 1948 was the only secondary school in northern Nigeria.

Since the British educational policy favoured the recruitment of emirs' children to the existing educational institutions, emirs who wished to send their children to school did not find it difficult to have them admitted. For instance, in 1920 ten brothers of Usman, the emir of Gwandu (1918–38), and two of his nephews were attending Birnin Kebbi elementary school, while two other brothers who were regarded as too old to receive formal schooling were receiving private lessons in reading, writing in Roman characters and arithmetic. That many emirs emulated Usman's example can be attested to by the fact that as early as 1935 six of the reigning emirs and more than thirty district heads, the majority of whom were emirs' sons, were former school boys. Again, out of a total of fifty emirs and chiefs who formed the membership of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs in 1952, twenty-three had received formal education up to elementary level or higher. Of the twenty-seven emirs and chiefs who did not receive formal schooling, fifteen were aged over sixty-three by 1952 and as such could not have been expected to attend school, remembering that native administration schools were not established outside Kano until 1912 and that the entry age to elementary schools was about eight years. Hence only twelve, or 24 per cent of the emirs and chiefs who were members of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs in 1952, and who ought to have attended school, since they were born after 1900, did not do so. Interestingly, with the exception of Sir Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto who succeeded in 1938, the emirs and chiefs in this category were from minor emirates and chiefdoms.

Indeed the Sultan of Sokoto was the only First Class Chief reigning in 1952 who ought to have attended school (since he was of school-going age when Sokoto elementary school was established in 1912), but did not do so. This fact has tended to foster the impression that the ruling house of Sokoto was generally indifferent to Western education. This impression is misleading, however. It must be remembered that Sultan Abubakar's immediate predecessor, Sultan Hassan (1931–8) could boast of elementary education. The

²³ Emir Aliyu was a member of the Malawa dynasty, founded by Malam Musa, the first Fulani emir of Zaria (1804–21). There are three other dynasties of the ruling house of Zaria namely Barnawa, Katsinawa and Sulibawa.

²⁴ Cited in Sir Hugh Clifford to Lord Milner, Lagos, 25 June 1920, C.O. 583/89.

fact of the matter is that Sultan Abubakar's father did not hold office as Sultan, so his attitude to Western education did not in any way reflect the official attitude of the ruling house of Sokoto. This assertion is further strengthened by the fact that Sultan Muhammad Tambari (1924–31) sent his sons to school zealously. For he very well knew that they had to acquire Western education in order to outshine their rivals for the succession to the emirship.²⁵ He knew, for instance, that had he not been literate in the Roman script, his chances of becoming the emir of Sokoto would have been very slim indeed.

All the First Class Chiefs of Sultan Abubakar's generation, namely Ahmed, the Lamido of Adamawa (1943–53), Samaila, the emir of Argungu (1942–53), Yahaya, the emir of Gwandu (1938–57), Usman Nagogo, the emir of Katsina (1944–81) and Ja'afaru, the emir of Zaria (1937–59), received formal Western education. The other five First Class Chiefs—namely Umar Ibu Muhammad Al Amin Al Kenemi, the Shehu of Bornu; Yakubu, the emir of Bauchi; Abdulkadir, the emir of Ilorin; Abdullah Bayero, the emir of Kano and Muhammad Ndayako, the emir of Bida, who in 1952 were aged eighty, sixty-three, sixty-five, seventy-six and seventy respectively—were too old to attend school when native administration schools were established in their emirates during the second decade of this century. Therefore their non-attendance at native administration schools should not be imputed to their fathers' aversion to Western education. Thus five of the six First Class Chiefs holding office in 1952 who ought to have received formal Western education did so. The only exception was Sultan Abubakar of Sokoto. In the light of this, and the fact that up to 66 per cent of the emirs and chiefs in the Northern Regional House of Chiefs in 1952 who were of school-going age when native administration schools were established in their emirates received formal education,²⁷ it is preposterous to argue, as is currently argued, that when called upon to send their sons to school, the emirs and other members of the nobility sent those of their slaves and servants instead, because of their alleged failure to see the need and necessity of Western education, and out of fear that their sons would be vulnerable to conversion to Christianity.²⁸

True, at the inception of government-sponsored education in 1910, there was some reluctance among the majority of the emirs to send their 'promising' sons to the chiefs' sons' school which was established at Nassarawa near Kano city by Hanns Vischer, the first Director of Education, northern Nigeria. This is confirmed by the fact that only one of the emirs holding office in 1952, namely Aliyu, the emir of Agaie (1935–53), in the former Niger province, attended the chiefs' sons' school in 1910. The chief reason why most of the emirs refused to send their 'promising' sons to the chiefs' sons' school at Nassarawa during its short existence (1910–12) was not because they did not

²⁵ On the reasons why Sultan Muhammad Tambari was in the end not succeeded by one of his sons see Tibenderana, 'Making', 110–34.

²⁶ For a clearer exposition of the election of Sultan Muhammad Tambari see *op. cit.* 91–101.

²⁷ The information on the emirs and chiefs in this section was gleaned from Northern Regional Government, *Illustrated Biographies of Members of Northern Regional Legislature* (Kaduna, 1952), 18–42. I should like to thank Dr Muhammad Tukur of the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, for bringing to my attention the existence of this work.

²⁸ See Hubbard, 'Education', 191–9.

realize the necessity of Western education, nor that they feared that their sons would be vulnerable to conversion to Christianity, but because they did not wish to put at risk their sons' lives by making them undertake a hazardous and dangerous journey to Kano. It must be remembered that during the period under consideration the only easily available means of transport was horseback or trekking. Under these circumstances it required exceptional courage amounting to hardihood for any emir, or anyone else for that matter, be he a Muslim or not, to allow his son or sons to undertake this type of journey which in most cases involved several hundreds of miles. That the chiefs' sons' school which was established at Sokoto in 1905 by Resident J. A. (later Sir John) Burdon to cater for the education of the sons of the emirs and chiefs in Sokoto province was well attended²⁹ tends to suggest that *ab ovo* the emirs in the province appreciated the aims of Western education.

It is possible, therefore, that the majority of the emirs, like their counterparts in Sokoto province, appreciated the aims of government-sponsored education for their sons from its inception in 1910. But rather than sending their sons to the chiefs' sons' school at Nassarawa most of them demanded to have their own schools. And, when the British administration gave in to this demand in 1912, by agreeing to establish primary schools at all the provincial headquarters, and elementary schools at the headquarters of the major emirates, the emirs reciprocated by being among the first to patronize the new schools and by urging other members of the nobility to do the same. It was not by sheer coincidence, for example, that in 1925 67 per cent of the pupils attending Bida primary school were sons of native administration officials, usually district and village heads, while in 1930 over 60 per cent of the pupils attending primary and elementary schools in the whole of Sokoto province were also sons of native administration officials including the emirs. Again, before 1931, over 80 per cent of the entrants to Katsina College (which, up to that year, was the only post-primary institution in northern Nigeria) whose background is known, were sons of native administration officials, usually district and village heads.³⁰ It can thus be concluded that it is erroneous to assert that the emirs and the district and village heads resorted to all kinds of subterfuges to keep their sons out of school,³¹ by inference suggesting that the emirs held back the cause of Western educational development.

From the inception of native administration schools, the majority of them were quite aware that the main aim of these schools was to groom their sons for posts in native administration institutions and not to convert them to Christianity. Thus by sending their own children to school they prodded their subjects, especially the members of the ruling class, to do likewise. This was no small contribution to the spread of Western education, since in a society, such as Hausa society, in which people look up to their emirs for leadership in both religious and temporal matters, people were most susceptible to their emirs' examples in every sphere of life. There is little doubt, therefore, that

²⁹ In 1907 the chiefs' sons' school of Sokoto had an enrolment of 36 pupils. They were all sons of the nobility. For a general discussion on the introduction of Western education in the former Sokoto province see P. K. Tibenderana, 'The administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu emirates under British rule, 1900-1946' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1974), 384-410.

³⁰ See Hubbard, 'Education', 295-399.

³¹ Heussler, *British*, 120.

the emirs' early endorsement of Western education had a stimulating effect on educational expansion generally which would otherwise have been lacking.

Lest I should be misunderstood, I am not suggesting here that the emirs as a group did nothing at all to promote the advancement of the education of the sons of the *talakawa* (commoners). Far from it. There is substantial evidence to suggest that a good number of the emirs took a very keen interest in the development of Western education for *talakawa*'s sons. For instance, during 1938–9 many emirs objected to the establishment of a princes' middle school at Kaduna, which was intended to ensure that emirs' sons and those of the most senior members of the nobility were given middle education of a higher standard than was given in a normal middle school. The leading opponent of the proposal to establish a princes' middle school was Abdullah Kadiri, the emir of Ilorin (1919–59). Emir Kadiri expressed the view that emirs' sons would receive the best moral education, which in his view was the most important aspect of education for the nobility, if they were educated together with the sons of the *talakawa* as was the case at the time. He further argued that it was morally wrong for emirs' sons to be given overdue advantage over *talakawa*'s sons in educational matters while the latter constituted the greater part of the population.³²

The emirs of Adamawa, Argungu, Katsina and Zaria subscribed to Emir Kadiri's point of view.³³ This was in spite of the fact that Sir Theodore Adams, the Chief Commissioner of the northern provinces (1937–43), who was responsible for initiating the proposal to establish a princes' middle school, had warned the emirs that unless their sons were given better educational facilities than those available to *talakawa*'s sons, the latter would sooner or later capture the reins of power from the former through their acquisition of higher education which would open their way to senior posts in the government.³⁴ However, some emirs supported the proposal to establish a princes' middle school. Among those who supported the proposal were the Sultan of Sokoto, the Shehu of Bornu and the emirs of Kano and Gwandu.³⁵

Again, in 1943 Samaila, the emir of Argungu (1942–53), while addressing the Chiefs Conference, which was held at Kaduna towards the end of that year, urged the British administration to grant the native administrations permission to introduce free meals for the pupils attending elementary schools. This was intended to mitigate the sufferings of the *talakawa*'s sons who, Emir Samaila asserted, frequently arrived at school in the morning insufficiently fed, making it impossible for them to concentrate on their studies – whereas if a free meal was provided, they would perform better in their examinations, thus making the educational system more efficient. He further argued that the introduction of free meals would go a long way to popularize education among the *talakawa*. The Chiefs Conference, which was

³² See Resident of Ilorin to S.N.P., Ilorin, 6 September 1937, N.N.A.K., Kadmineduc. 4/2/D.D.N. 1658/3319/9.

³³ See S.N.P., 'Summary of the proceedings of the Conference of Chiefs', 1938, N.N.A.K., C.R.F. 1/1/1938.

³⁴ See S.N.P. to Residents, Kaduna, 10 August 1937, N.N.A.K., Kadmineduc. 4/2/D.D.N. 1657/28961/2.

³⁵ The proposal to establish a princes' middle school at Kaduna was approved by the Governor in 1938. The school was scheduled to commence in 1939, but it did not commence as scheduled due to the shortage of funds. The scheme remained in abeyance until the late 1940s when it was finally abandoned.

attended by all the First Class Chiefs, voted in favour of the scheme, but warned that, due to the shortage of revenue at the disposal of the native administrations for educational development, it could not be fully implemented.³⁶ Accordingly, each native administration was mandated to implement the scheme within the limits of its financial resources. It is heartening to note that some native administrations, especially those in the Muslim areas, implemented the scheme at selected schools. Unfortunately, the scheme was abandoned in the early 1950s due to lack of money and support from the politicians who took over the leadership of northern Nigeria from the emirs in 1952.

These are but a few of the instances which would seem to suggest that the emirs, as a group, were interested in the promotion of educational development for the generality of their people, rather than being solely interested in the advancement of education for chiefs' sons. Also they encouraged educational development in both Muslim and non-Muslim areas within their emirates. This brings us to the important subject of their attitude towards mission education.

The attitude of the emirs to missionary enterprise in general and education in particular was largely influenced by British colonial policies. Generally speaking, throughout the period 1910–46, British administrative policies in northern Nigeria were adverse to missionary enterprise, including education, especially in the Muslim emirates. For example, missionary societies could not establish stations and schools in the Muslim emirates without prior approval of the Governor. And until the 1930s missionary societies found it very arduous to secure such approval. Although there were many reasons why the British administration restricted missionary activities in the Muslim emirates, the chief one was the British political officers' desire to maintain the *status quo* and to avoid the production of 'disgruntled intellectuals' who were held culpable for anti-British activities in such places as India, Egypt and Lagos. Accordingly in circumventing missionary enterprise in the Muslim emirates British political officers hoped to kill two birds with one stone. The maintenance of the *status quo* was intended to assure the British of a turbulence-free and cheap administration which in turn would prolong the era of Pax Britannica in northern Nigeria. Out of these considerations British political officers in the Muslim emirates were usually very reluctant to support applications by missionary societies wishing to establish stations and schools in their areas of jurisdiction. The main reason normally given to justify their action was that the emirs in whose emirates missionary societies wished to establish stations and schools were hotly opposed to having missionaries in their emirates.

While in some cases this claim might have been well founded, there are indications to suggest that in other cases it was mendacious, and merely used to conceal the anti-missionary attitude harboured by many British political officers.³⁷ For at no time during the period covered by this article did the emirs regard the prospects of having missionary stations and schools in their

³⁶ See S.N.P., 'Summary of the proceedings of the conference of Chiefs', 1943, N.N.A.K., C.F.R.1/1/1943.

³⁷ On the attitude of British political officers to missionary enterprise, including education, see E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842–1914* (London, 1966), 139–52; and S. F. Graham, *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900–1919* (Ibadan, 1966), 32–97.

emirates as *casus belli*, as British official reports would have us believe. The attitude of the majority of the emirs to missionary enterprise, particularly education, was indeed lukewarm and in few cases enthusiastic.³⁸ But if some emirs were at one time or another opposed to having mission stations established in their emirates, as indeed was the case, it was not on religious grounds *per se*, but rather out of political considerations.

Thus a distinction must be made between political and religious opposition to missionaries by the emirs. Generally speaking some were opposed to the introduction of missionary enterprise in their emirates on political grounds. The missionaries themselves were largely responsible for this state of affairs. On the whole missionaries, particularly the British ones, viewed their role in northern Nigeria not only as that of spreading the gospel but of defending the political rights of the Hausa peasantry against 'Fulani misrule and oppression'.³⁹ For instance, in 1903 Dr W. R. Miller⁴⁰ of the Church Missionary Society complained to Lugard that the mass of the people were very disappointed that the Fulani 'tyrants' were retained as rulers by the British administration. He asserted that the retention of the Fulani emirs was a gross betrayal of the people whose goodwill, according to him, had made British occupation of northern Nigeria possible.⁴¹ He further argued that it would be in Britain's interests to effect a 'total removal of the Fillani [sic] regime', for 'the Fillani *is not, will not be and cannot* ever be loyal to the British Government'.⁴² He called upon the British administration to depose the Fulani emirs and to replace them by Habe rulers who were swept from power by the Sokoto *jihad* of 1804.

Again in 1920 the diocesan synod of the Church Missionary Society, Lagos, passed a resolution calling upon the Governor to remove all the restrictions imposed on missionary enterprise in the Muslim emirates. The synod contended that this was necessary because, in its view, the presence of enlightened and Christian people in the Muslim emirates would do much 'to bring to light the abuses and oppression incidental to indirect rule through Moslem Chiefs, the knowledge of which has reached the Synod from various sources'.⁴³ This claim would seem to suggest that missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, among others, not only detested the retention of the Fulani emirs in office but made frantic efforts to discredit them before British political officers as 'oppressors' of the Hausa peasantry in order to have them removed from office. Not surprisingly there was a tendency among missionaries to accuse the emirs to British political officers of trivial 'offences'.⁴⁴ Naturally where missionaries undertook this officious crusade the emirs

³⁸ This conclusion is based on information provided by Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith, the former Governor of northern Nigeria (1952-7). Personal communication from Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, Bexhill-on-Sea, 3 August 1971.

³⁹ See Ayandele, *Missionary*, 127-46; and W. R. Miller, *Have We Failed in Nigeria?* (London, 1947).

⁴⁰ Dr W. R. Miller was for many years the leader of the Church Missionary Society Hausa mission based at Zaria.

⁴¹ See Ayandele, *Missionary*, 144.

⁴² Cited in *op. cit.* 145. All the italics are in the original quotation.

⁴³ Sir Hugh Clifford to Lord Milner, Lagos, 21 October 1920, encl. Extract from a letter addressed to the Governor by the Bishop of Lagos, 17 May 1920, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 8/7/80/1920.

⁴⁴ Personal communication from Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, Bexhill-on-Sea, 3 August 1971; and Sir Arthur Weatherhead, Amberley Court, Stroud, 12 August 1971. Sir Arthur was the Deputy Governor of northern Nigeria 1958-60. Before this appointment he had served in many provinces as a Resident.

became hostile to the missionaries concerned. It must be emphasized, however, that such hostility was directed at the individual missionaries involved rather than at the missionary societies to which they belonged.⁴⁵ It must also be realized that emirs were susceptible of becoming hostile to any European be he a missionary or not, who attempted to undermine their authority in any way.⁴⁸

But where the emirs did not feel that their authority would be threatened their attitude to missionary enterprise was on the whole tolerant. For example, C. L. Temple, the Resident of Sokoto during 1905–8, who had occasion to discuss with Muhammad Attahiru, the Sultan of Sokoto (1903–15), the prospects of missionary societies being granted permission to establish stations and schools in his emirate, was left in no doubt that the Sultan's objections to the proposal were born out of political and not religious considerations. Recounting his discussions later he wrote that 'The religious difficulty I never heard him refer to, and I do not think that it bulked largely in his imagination'.⁴⁷ As time went by, and the emirs adjusted fully to the colonial situation, even the opposition to the establishment of missionary stations and schools in their emirates on political grounds aired by Sultan Attahiru lost some of its flavour. For instance, in 1934 Usman, the emir of Gwandu, informed Commander J. H. Carrow, the Resident of Sokoto at the time, that he had no objection to missionary societies being permitted to establish stations and schools in his emirate. He held to the view that every person should have a religion based on the scriptures and that, since Muslim clerics were not willing to convert his pagan subjects to Islam, unless they were remunerated, he was willing to allow Christian missionaries to convert them to Christianity.

The Sultan of Sokoto, with whom Resident Carrow discussed the possibility of granting permission to missionary societies to establish stations in his emirate in early 1934,⁴⁸ subscribed to Emir Usman's point of view.⁴⁹ Several other emirs shared his view.⁵⁰ Indeed, during the formative stages of Dr W. R. Miller's school at Zaria (1906–9), Aliyu, the emir of Zaria (1903–20), was its strongest supporter, even though he knew that the school had as its Hausa reading books the Gospel of St John, the Gospel of St Mark and the First Epistle of St John, and stories in Hausa from the New Testament, all of which were Dr Miller's translations.⁵¹ And although it is true that later on Aliyu withdrew his support for Dr Miller's school, this was not because he then realized that the school was ruinous to Islam but because he did not like Dr Miller's direct interference in the running of his emirate. It is interesting to note that in 1920 Aliyu was deposed by the Governor allegedly on the basis of charges brought against him by Dr Miller.⁵²

⁴⁵ Personal communication from Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, Bexhill-on-Sea, 3 August 1971; and Sir Arthur Weatherhead, Amberley Court, Stroud, 12 August 1971.

⁴⁶ See Temple, *Native*, 213–7; and Ubah, 'Problems', 368–71.

⁴⁷ Temple, *Native*, 215.

⁴⁸ Missionary enterprise was first introduced in Sokoto emirate in 1935. The Roman Catholic Mission and the Church Missionary Society were the first to establish stations in Sokoto town in 1935.

⁴⁹ Commander J. H. Carrow, oral testimony, when interviewed by the author, Weymouth, 23 September 1971. Carrow was the Resident of Sokoto 1934–42.

⁵⁰ See E. P. T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* (Zaria, 1975), 64–7.

⁵¹ Graham, *Government*, 48–51.

⁵² See H. R. Palmer to Governor, Kaduna, 6 October 1928, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 9/3/217/1928.

The apparent willingness of the emirs to permit missionary societies to establish stations and schools in their emirates, fully aware of their evangelical mission, though astonishing, is not hard to explain. The emirs, and many of their well-informed Muslim subjects, very strongly believed (as some of them still do) that no Muslim well advanced in the tenets of Islam could abandon his religion for Christianity or any other religion for that matter. This belief was not groundless. For the history of Islam is full of instances of Christian countries becoming Muslim voluntarily. This apart, the emirs must have been aware that Prophet Muhammad urged Muslims to live in peace with 'the people of the book', that is to say, Christians and Jews.⁵³ That missionary societies have up to the present day miserably failed to make any impression on Muslims, despite their stupendous efforts, exonerates the emirs of naivety in their belief that the existence of missionary stations and schools, which they knew would bestow upon their subjects economic and social benefits, could not attenuate Islam and lead to mass conversion of their Muslim subjects to Christianity.

It can be surmised from the above observations on the attitude of some of the emirs to missionary enterprise in their emirates that British political officers rather than the emirs were largely responsible for most of the disabilities which missionary societies suffered, especially in the realm of education, during 1910–1946. Thus the failure of mission education to flourish in the Muslim emirates, particularly in pagan areas within these emirates, during the period should not be blamed on the emirs' alleged pertinacious opposition to missionary enterprise in their emirates, but rather on the anti-missionary policies of the British administration. Their aim was to discourage the spread of mission education because it was held culpable for producing anti-British-rule nationalists in West Africa, especially in Lagos.

Thus, while expressing his opposition to the expansion of mission education in northern Nigeria, which was proposed by the Director of Education in 1942, Sir Theodore Adams contended that there could not be room for the proposed increase in the number of mission schools in pagan areas where, he asserted, there was a strong case for opening native administration schools, which according to him, 'provided an education which did not take boys away from the land unlike mission education which did exactly the opposite'.⁵⁴ That a few mission schools were established in the Muslim emirates at all is a credit to the emirs who, if they had wanted, could have exploited the widely publicized anti-missionary attitude harboured by many British political officers to ensure that no missionary society was permitted to establish schools there. In the light of this it seems unfair to the emirs to assert, as Professor Albert Ozigi and Mr Lawrence Ocho have asserted, that missions in northern Nigeria faced the hostility of the emirs and other Muslim chiefs who saw in Christianity a threat to Islam as well as to their temporal power.⁵⁵

The emirs also waged an infructuous campaign to force the British administration to increase educational facilities in their emirates which, from their point of view, were woefully inadequate. For example, in 1933, soon

⁵³ See A. Y. Ali, *The Holy Qu'ran: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Beirut, 1968), sura 29, verses 46 and 47.

⁵⁴ Sir Theodore S. Adams, 'Comments on the proposed ten-year educational development plan for Nigeria', 1942, N.N.A.K.; Kadmineduc. 4/2D.D.N.2039A.

⁵⁵ Ozigi and Ocho, *Education*, 31.

after the British administration had established girls' schools at Kano and Katsina, Hassan, the Sultan of Sokoto, and Usman, the emir of Gwandu, demanded to have similar schools established at their capitals. They first made their request to Mr G. J. Lethem, the Acting Lieutenant-Governor of the northern provinces, in early 1933 while he was on an official tour of Sokoto province. Then on 30 May, during an interview with Lethem at Kaduna, they renewed their request. Lethem pleaded with them that the British administration did not have sufficient funds to pay the salaries of the European women teachers who would be required to run the schools. They responded by pledging to give up part of their salaries annually to augment the available government funds to facilitate the engagement of two European women teachers.⁵⁶

After this meeting the Acting Lieutenant-Governor acknowledged that they were genuinely keen to have girls' schools established in their emirates. Indeed he was sufficiently persuaded to shift from his earlier position, held as late as February 1933, that it would not be expedient to consider further expansion of girls' education, until the progress already made at Kano and Katsina had been consolidated, to a position of being a zealous champion of the immediate expansion of girls' education.⁵⁷ Accordingly he asked Mr E. R. J. Hussey, the Director of Education, to discuss with Sultan Hassan and Emir Usman the prospects of starting girls' schools at Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi during their official visit to Lagos which was due to take place in June 1933.

Mr Hussey held talks with them in early June 1933. He was highly impressed by their genuine concern to promote girls' and women's education in their emirates. But he parried their request for girls' schools by pointing out to them that, even if the government had money to pay the salaries of the two European women teachers, it would not be possible to find such teachers at the time. To this bluff they retorted that they were prepared to accept Yoruba women teachers, some of whom they had seen in action at Queen's College, Lagos.⁵⁸ This audacious stand,⁵⁹ coming from obsequious emirs such as Hassan and Usman, long regarded by many British political officers as the most liberal emirs in northern Nigeria, had the effect of convincing the officials of the Education Department of the necessity to have girls' schools established at Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi, especially as Sokoto and Gwandu native administrations had agreed to pay the salaries of the two European women teachers.⁶⁰ Accordingly, two girls' schools, one at Sokoto and the other at Birnin Kebbi, were established in 1934.

⁵⁶ S.N.P. to Chief Secretary to the Government, Kaduna, 27 July 1933, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 17/2/11133/1.

⁵⁷ On G. J. Lethem's views on the development of girls' education in northern Nigeria see S.N.P. to Chief Secretary to the Government, Kaduna, 27 July 1933, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 17/2/11133/1.

⁵⁸ S.N.P., 'Extract from an account of a visit to Lagos by the Sultan of Sokoto and the emir of Gwandu', June 1933, N.N.A.K., Sokprof. 3/2/574/1.

⁵⁹ Sultan Hassan and Emir Usman were quite aware of the British administration's policy to discourage Nigerian teachers trained outside northern Nigeria from teaching in native administration schools for fear that they would have 'detribalizing' effects on the pupils.

⁶⁰ The payment of the salaries of European staff of the Nigerian Government and its agencies was generally the responsibility of the government. But because of the economic

Among the other emirs who zealously requested girls' schools were those of Adamawa, Argungu, Bornu, Ilorin and Zaria. Unfortunately for them their requests were not granted throughout the period covered by this article. This was due to the fact that, as from 1935, the British administration introduced co-education in native administration elementary schools instead of establishing girls' schools' which were thought to be too expensive. The introduction of co-education in native administration schools was carried out in the face of vehement opposition by the emirs. They feared that co-education would have dire consequences on the spread of girls' and women's education since many of their subjects would be unwilling to send their daughters to co-educational schools. This was because it was generally feared, rightly or wrongly, that co-education would encourage sexual immorality among female pupils. There are indications to suggest that the emirs' fears that their subjects would be reluctant to send their daughters to co-educational schools were well-founded. For instance, whereas the number of girls (314) who attended elementary schools in Sokoto province in 1937, where girls were taught in classrooms separate from boys, at the insistence of the emirs,⁶¹ was said to be far in excess of the maximum that could best be absorbed in the existing elementary schools, in other provinces, where girls and boys were taught in the same classrooms, the number of girls receiving elementary education in 1937 was very small indeed. For example, the number of girls attending native administration elementary schools in 1937 in Kano, Niger, Ilorin and Bornu provinces, where boys and girls were taught in the same classrooms, was 77, 95, 72 and 62 respectively.⁶² It is interesting to note that during the same year native administration girls' schools at Birnin Kebbi, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto were operating at full capacity. They had a total enrolment of 200 pupils.⁶³

It can be surmised from the above figures that parents were more willing to send their daughters to girls' schools or, as an alternative, to elementary schools which had separate classrooms for girls, rather than send them to elementary schools in which boys and girls were taught together in the same classrooms. Otherwise how can one explain the disparity between the number of girls who attended native administration elementary schools in Sokoto province in 1937 and the other provinces of comparable size in population and number of schools like Bornu and Kano? It would be unsound, therefore,

depression of the 1930s the Nigerian Government suffered a sharp fall in revenue and had to embark on retrenchment of European staff in order to make ends meet. Accordingly, Sokoto and Gwandu native administrations were allowed to pay the salaries of the two European women teachers in charge of their schools because, as Mr Lethem put it, 'the government could not object to Native Administrations putting up the money to pay for European mistresses' salaries where there was a genuine desire to do so'. G. J. Lethem to E. J. Hussey, Kaduna, 30 May 1933, N.N.A.K., Sokprof. 3/2/4388.

⁶¹ Although the Sultan of Sokoto and the emir of Gwandu succumbed to British pressure to allow girls to attend boys' elementary schools in their emirates, they still insisted that girls in such schools should be taught in separate classrooms. However in 1939 separate classrooms for girls in elementary schools were abolished throughout northern Nigeria except in Sokoto emirate. This measure was extended to Sokoto emirate during the late 1940s.

⁶² These figures are extracted from A. Booker to Education Officers, Sokoto, 15 April 1940, N.N.A.K., Kadmineduc. 4/12/D.D.N. 883/1.

⁶³ See A. Booker to Assistant Director of Education, Sokoto, 21 September 1936, N.N.A.K., Kadmineduc. 4/12/D.D.N. 883/1.

to claim that the emirs' opposition to co-education was harmful to the development of girls' and women's education. If anything their opposition to co-education, and their demand for the establishment of girls' schools, was auspicious to the development of girls' and women's education. It can thus be concluded that had the British administration heeded the emirs' advice and established girls' schools, instead of introducing co-education in native administration schools, the northern provinces might have witnessed greater expansion in girls' and women's education during the period covered by this article than was the case.

In 1934 a request by Sule, the emir of Fika (1919–41), for more elementary schools and a middle school to be established in his emirate also fell on deaf ears. Emir Sule's chief complaint about the existing school system was that the chances of any boy advancing beyond the elementary stage of education were very slight indeed. Accordingly, he asked for a middle school to be established in his emirate, and proposed that, if this was not feasible, elementary education should be prolonged and made more comprehensive than it was at the time, so that boys leaving elementary schools would be of mature age, fit for employment in some minor native administrative posts. For, according to him, under the existing system boys left elementary schools at a tender age too young to be employed, and by the time they were old enough to take up employment they had forgotten all they had learnt at school. The District Officer in charge of Fika emirate informed the Resident of Bornu that the views expressed by Emir Sule were his personal views and that they showed that he had given the matter a certain amount of thought.⁶⁴ Unfortunately none of Emir Sule's proposals was entertained. In fact his request for a middle school to be established in his small emirate must have been viewed as incongruous by the Resident, who was well aware of the policy of the Education Department not to maintain more than one middle school in any province (Bornu province already had a middle school at Maiduguri).

Indeed Birnin Kebbi middle school fell a victim of this policy. For in 1935 the authorities of the Education Department at Kaduna, acting on instructions from Lagos, ordered the school to be closed down, so that Sokoto province, which at the time had two middle schools – the other was at Sokoto – would have one, like the other provinces. The pupils were subsequently transferred to Sokoto middle school.

It was closed down despite the vehement opposition to the measure mounted by Usman, the emir of Gwandu. When the plan to close it down was first reported to him by Resident Carrow, he was shocked and angered. He protested furiously. To save the school he and his councillors pleaded with the Resident that Gwandu native administration had enough funds to run it, and that if this was not acceptable to the government they were prepared to make contributions from their salaries annually to pay teachers' salaries and maintain the school. In the face of this generous and ingenuous offer the Resident informed the emir and his council that the order to close the school came from the Governor and that there was very little anyone could do to have it rescinded.⁶⁵ This left Emir Usman in a mood of embitterment. He

⁶⁴ J. M. Shallwood to Resident of Bornu, Potiskum, 3 June 1934, N.N.A.K., Kad-mineduc. 1/1/D.E.N. 982.

⁶⁵ J. H. Carrow, oral testimony, when interviewed by the author, Weymouth, 23 September 1971. Also cited in Tibenderana, 'Administration', 410–11.

had fought as hard as he could to save his most cherished institution, but failed to save it because he no longer had power to determine how his native administration's revenue should be expended.

Abdullah Bayero, the emir of Kano (1926–52), who was also dissatisfied with the number of native administration elementary schools in Kano, established a private school within his palace. The school was reserved for his sons and grandsons and those of some of his relatives. It was taken over by the Education Department in 1936. Annual reports of the Education Department covering the period 1910–46 are full of instances of emirs' requests for more schools not being honoured by the British administration on the grounds of lack of money and trained staff. It can be concluded from the above observations that the emirs did their best to make the British administration spend more money on education but without much success. It is, therefore, fallacious to accuse them of having failed to ask the British administration to build more schools in their emirates, as some scholars would have us believe.⁶⁶

The emirs also registered their disapproval of the quality of education given in native administration elementary schools, especially the non-inclusion of English in the curriculum. Up to the late 1940s English was not generally taught in elementary schools in northern Nigeria although it was taught in similar schools in southern Nigeria. As early as 1917 many emirs were demanding that English should be introduced into the curriculum. For example, in 1918 the Secretary of the northern provinces informed the Director of Education that native administrations 'clamour for more English to be taught in the schools. At present I am told that Ilorin boys are sent to the mission schools and to Lagos in order to learn English'.⁶⁷ The emirs' unyielding demand for English to be introduced in native administration elementary schools continued incessantly throughout the 1920s and 1930s but to no avail. Thus in 1943 the majority of them attacked the proposed ten-year educational development plan for Nigeria, drawn up by the Director of Education, for its failure to include English anywhere in the curriculum of elementary schools.⁶⁸ At their annual conference held at Kaduna late that year the emirs and chiefs agreed that it was desirable to introduce English in elementary schools. They contended that lack of instruction in English was one of the main causes of educational backwardness of northern Nigeria compared with southern Nigeria. In the light of this, the Chiefs Conference recommended that the teaching of English should commence in elementary class II.⁶⁹ This recommendation was eventually incorporated into the Education Ordinance of 1948.

In light of the above observations it is unjustifiable to claim, as has been done, that the emirs were opposed to the teaching of English in native administration schools largely out of fear that it would vitiate Arabic. Although, as the votaries of Islam, the emirs continued to support the

⁶⁶ See Hubbard, 'Education', 192.

⁶⁷ S.N.P. to Director of Education, Kaduna, 8 April 1918, N.N.A.K., S.N.P. 9/5/3721/1918.

⁶⁸ See F. M. Noard to S.N.P., Zaria, 10 February 1943, N.N.A.K., Provincial Office, Zaria.

⁶⁹ S.N.P., 'Summary of proceedings of the Conference of Chiefs, 1943', N.N.A.K., C.F.R. 1/1/1943.

development of Islamic education, including Arabic, they also realized that it was essential for them to encourage the development of Western education which was necessary for the amelioration of the socio-economic and political life of their people under changed circumstances. Also the assumption that the emirs urged school authorities to teach Arabic in native administration schools to the exclusion of English is misleading. For, although some rudiments of Arabic were taught in native administration elementary schools, as part of the Qu'ranic studies, no attempts were made to teach classical Arabic in these schools. Pupils attending native administration elementary schools who were seriously interested in Arabic had to attend Qu'ranic schools in the evenings after their normal school hours and during their holidays. This in part explains why Qu'ranic schools were not devitalized by the establishment of native administration schools.

It is clear from the foregoing discussions that the emirs played a more prominent role in the spread of Western education in their emirates than has hitherto been realized. The accusations usually made against them that they did nothing to foster the spread of Western education are baseless and ill founded. The emirs had no power to initiate educational development projects. And although they could exert pressure on the British administration to have certain educational projects undertaken, their chances of success in this endeavour were generally slim. This was due to the fact that low priority was accorded to education by the British administration which, up to the 1940s, was still law-and-order oriented as opposed to development oriented. This meant that more revenue was spent on law enforcement agencies than on education.

Here then lies the main cause of educational stagnation in northern Nigeria during the colonial era, rather than the emirs' alleged dogged conservatism which, we are told, made them incapable of realizing the benefits of Western education. Nor is it true to say that British educational policy was palatable to the emirs because of its alleged aim of maintaining the *status quo*.⁷⁰ The emirs' interests and those of the British in the realm of education were at variance. For whereas the former demanded more schools and better education, which they knew would enable their subjects to be appointed to positions of responsibility in government, which were held by Europeans and people from southern Nigeria—a process which, in their view, would eventually shorten British rule—the latter worked for its longevity by restricting educational expansion.

In 1920 Sir H. Read, the Assistant Under Secretary at the Colonial Office, warned Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria (1919–25), who had proposed to liberalize educational development⁷¹ in northern Nigeria, that British policy in northern Nigeria had to be guided by the fact that 'man is

⁷⁰ See Hull, 'Development', 353; and Boyan, 'Educational', 110–22.

⁷¹ In 1920 Sir Hugh Clifford wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to request powers to accelerate educational development in northern Nigeria. He complained to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the object of the British administration in northern Nigeria at the time was solely the maintenance of the *status quo*, the perpetuation of more or less medieval conditions by the aid of every natural and artificial means, the staving off of innovations including education and the preservation of the intellectual and material standards of the people. Sir Hugh Clifford to Lord Milner, Lagos, 25 June 1920, C.O. 583/89.

by nature a political animal' and that direct government by impartial and honest men of alien race, even if accompanied by an increase in material wealth and the benefits of modern science and industry could never satisfy a nation for long, and that under such a form of government as 'wealth and education increased so would political discontent and sedition'.⁷² Not surprisingly Sir Hugh Clifford's educational proposals were turned down by the Secretary of State for the Colonies who reminded him that the purpose of the British administration in northern Nigeria was to assist native administrations to promote the 'true happiness' and well being of their people and not educational and material development.⁷³ This remained the position of the Colonial Office until the late 1940s, and was an important factor in retarding the development of Western education in northern Nigeria.

The foregoing discussions ought to have demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the emirs were dissatisfied with both the quality and quantity of education which was given in native administration schools, and that they did everything in their power to effect remedial measures but without much success. They cannot, therefore be said to have been lethargic in their efforts to promote educational development in their respective emirates. It must be emphasized, however, that their support for Western education did not in any way reduce their interests and support for Islamic education. They continued to be doughty champions of Islamic education because of its religious importance. As Muslim leaders they could not have done otherwise.

However, with the inauguration of the Northern Regional House of Assembly in 1947, in which the *talakawa* were represented, the emirs ceased to be the only recognized voice of the North. They shared this role with the members of the House of Assembly and could no longer be held solely responsible for influencing government policies regarding educational development. It is for this reason that our present discussion stops in 1946.

SUMMARY

This article opens with a brief mention of the major criticisms which are currently made against the emirs' role in the development of Western education in northern Nigeria during the colonial era. It is suggested that these criticisms are ill founded and that they are more often than not based on a misconception of the emirs' power in the colonial situation. It is argued that the emirs were not *de facto* rulers of their respective emirates and had no powers to initiate educational development projects. The main discussion focuses on their attitude to Western education and how they took advantage of the educational opportunities offered by native administration schools to foster the political interests of their sons. It then examines their efforts to persuade the British administration to expand educational facilities in their emirates including those for female education and why these efforts were generally fruitless. Examination of the historical record reveals that the emirs played a more prominent role in the advancement of Western education than has hitherto been recognized.

⁷² Sir H. Read, 'Minute on Sir Hugh Clifford's despatch to Lord Milner, 25 June 1920', 1920, C.O. 583/96.

⁷³ L. S. Amery to Sir Hugh Clifford, London, 29 March 1921, C.O. 583/89.